



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
BALTIMORE DISTRICT, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 1715
BALTIMORE, MD 21203-1715

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

March 11, 2011

Operations Division

SUBJECT: Baltimore Harbor and Channels, Maryland - Proposed Maintenance Dredging of the Craighill Entrance Channel, Craighill Channel, Craighill Angle, Craighill Upper Range, Cutoff Angle, Brewerton Channel Eastern Extension, Tolchester Channel, and Swan Point Channel

PUBLIC NOTICE – CENAB-OP-N-11-02

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Pursuant to Sections 313 and 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 USC 1323 and 1344), NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT PENDING THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, the Baltimore District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, proposes to perform maintenance dredging of the Baltimore Harbor & Channels Federal navigation project during calendar years 2011 and 2012.

The plans and location of the proposed work are shown on the enclosed map. The proposed work consists of maintenance dredging the following channels to their respective authorized dimensions: Craighill Entrance Channel, Craighill Channel, Craighill Angle, and Craighill Upper Range to a depth of 50 feet and width of 700 feet; Craighill Angle to a depth of 50 feet and width of 700 to 1,870 feet; Cutoff Angle to a depth of 50 feet and width of 700 to 1,740 feet; and Brewerton Channel Eastern Extension, Tolchester Channel, and Swan Point Channel to a depth of 35 feet and width of 600 feet. The dredging includes one foot of advanced maintenance dredging in the Craighill Entrance Channel, Craighill Channel, Craighill Angle, Craighill Upper Range, and Cutoff Angle; two feet of advanced maintenance in the Brewerton Channel Eastern Extension, Tolchester Channel, and Swan Point channel; and two feet of allowable overdepth dredging in all channels. Due to the imprecise nature of dredging operations, the dredging contractor may remove excess material beyond the limits described above in some areas and may not remove all material in other areas.

Approximately 2,500,000 cubic yards of material consisting primarily of mud, silt, sand, shell, and mixtures thereof would be dredged by clamshell and scow, hydraulic pipeline, and/or hopper dredge, and would be placed at the 1,140-acre Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island (Poplar Island) located on the eastern side of the Chesapeake Bay, northwest of Tilghman Island, Talbot County, Maryland. In order to maximize drying and consolidation of the material at Poplar Island, dredging will be scheduled to take place between September 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012.

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The Regional Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, has considered dredged material previously removed from the Craighill Entrance Channel, Craighill Channel, Craighill Angle, Craighill Upper Range, Cutoff Angle, Brewerton Channel Eastern Extension, Tolchester Channel, and Swan Point channel satisfactory for placement at Poplar Island. The sediment to be dredged from the above channels has been tested in accordance with criteria promulgated by the Environmental Protection Agency as published in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 230, to ensure the suitability of the Chesapeake Bay channels sediment for placement at Poplar Island. The Baltimore District will monitor the Poplar Island Environmental Restoration project before, during, and after placement operations.

The proposed methods of dredging and placement of material are addressed in and consistent with the Final Environmental Impact Statement and accompanying Supplemental Information - Operation & Maintenance of Baltimore Harbor & Associated Channels, Maryland & Virginia filed with the Council on Environmental Quality on January 10, 1975 and January 9, 1976, respectively; the Final Environmental Impact Statement - Proposed Plan for Completing the Navigation Improvements, Authorized by the 1958 River and Harbor Act for the Baltimore Harbor and Channels, Maryland and Virginia, filed with the Environmental Protection Agency on November 21, 1979; the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Supplemental Information Report for Baltimore Harbor and Channels, Maryland and Virginia dated August 1981 and January 1982, respectively; the Supplement to the General Design Memorandum and Supplemental Information Report for the Baltimore Harbor and Channels Maryland and Virginia 42-Foot Project, filed with the Office of Federal Activities on June 23, 1986; the Poplar Island, Maryland Environmental Restoration Project Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Impact Statement, February 1996; the Baltimore Harbor & Channels, Maryland & Virginia, 42-Foot Project, Brewerton Channel Eastern Extension, Maryland Limited Reevaluation Report and Environmental Assessment, August 1997; the Final Proposed New Work Dredging Baltimore Harbor and Channels, Maryland and Virginia – Straightening of the Tolchester Channel S-Turn, Maryland, Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact, March 2001, and the Final Baltimore Harbor & Channels Dredged Material Management Plan and Tiered Environmental Impact Statement, December 2005.

A preliminary review of this work, previous evaluations of historical dredging and placement operations for the Baltimore Harbor project, recent studies on the shortnose sturgeon, and information gathered for the Draft Biological Assessment on the Potential Impacts of Dredging and Dredged Material Placement Operations on Shortnose Sturgeon in the Chesapeake Bay, Maryland, indicate that the proposed work will not adversely affect listed species or their critical habitat pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act as amended.

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The proposed maintenance dredging will comply with and will be conducted in a manner consistent with the approved Maryland Coastal Zone Management Program. Any comments regarding the consistency determination should be sent to the Maryland Department of the Environment, 1800 Washington Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21230-1708, within 30 days of the date of this notice. The proposed work is being coordinated with the US Environmental Protection Agency; US Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service; US Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service; and the Maryland Departments of the Environment, Natural Resources, Transportation, Maryland Port Administration, Housing and Community Development, and Business and Economic Development.

Designation of the proposed placement site for the dredged material associated with this Federal project shall be made through the application of guidelines promulgated by the administrator, Environmental Protection Agency, in conjunction with the Secretary of the Army. If these guidelines alone prohibit the designation of the proposed placement site, any potential impairment to the maintenance of navigation including any economic impact on navigation and anchorage which would result from the failure to use this placement site will also be considered.

Previous cultural resources reconnaissance surveys and intensive marine surveys have indicated that there are no historically significant artifacts in the proposed work areas. A review of the latest published version of the National Register of Historic Places indicates that there are no registered properties or properties listed as eligible for inclusion therein located at the proposed work sites. Currently unknown archaeological, scientific, prehistoric, or historical data may be lost or destroyed by the proposed work.

The decision whether to accomplish the work proposed in this public notice will be based on an evaluation of the probable impact, including cumulative impacts, of the proposed work on the public interest. The decision will reflect the national concern for the protection and utilization of important resources. The benefits which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the proposal must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the proposal will be considered; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, energy needs, general environmental concerns, fish and wildlife values, wetlands, historic and cultural values, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, water quality, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, recreation, safety, food production, and in general, the needs and the welfare of the people. The work will not be accomplished unless it is found to be in the public interest.

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Any person who has an interest which may be affected by the placement of this dredged material may request a public hearing. The request must be submitted in writing to the District Engineer, US Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, PO Box 1715, Baltimore, Maryland 21203-1715 within 30 days of the date of this notice and must clearly set forth the interest which may be affected and the manner in which the interest may be affected by this activity. Please contact Mr. P. Kevin Mainquist (410) 962-5674 if there are any questions regarding the proposed work.

A Water Quality Certification will be required from the Department of the Environment for this project and this Public Notice is considered the application for the Water Quality Certification. This certification is required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. Any written comments or questions regarding water quality considerations involved with this project should be directed to the Maryland Department of the Environment, Wetlands and Waterways Program, 1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 430, Baltimore, MD 21230-1708 within 30 days of the date of this notice.

Please communicate the foregoing information concerning the proposed work to any persons known by you to be interested, and who not being known to this office, do not receive a copy of this notice.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



Marie G. Burns
Chief, Operations Division

Enclosure

